



## Coaching and Mentoring Skills

### Do's and Don'ts

Provided by Catherine Robinson-Walker, MBA, MCC

#### **Do**

- Clear your head before engaging in a coaching or mentoring conversation
- Be an open, empathic listener
- Find the time to meet with individuals who want or need your developmental support
- Express warmth and respect when they are authentic for you
- Earn the trust of the person/s you are coaching
- Use appropriate and respectful processes for offering feedback (provide feedback in a timely way, be specific, check for understanding, provide feedback about behavior rather than personal characteristics that cannot be changed, etc.)
- When you are coaching, use more questions than statements.
- When you are coaching, ask for specific plans for follow up
- Help your coachee become accountable for her results. For example, ask by when she will do what she has committed to; ask whether and how you can support her efforts as she proceeds, etc.
- Be mindful of who you are "being" in your coaching relationship.
- Hold your colleague in positive regard.



## **Don't**

- Be afraid to offer a differing opinion or viewpoint that respectfully challenges the mentee or "coachee's" perspective
- Turn away a mentee or coachee when she wishes to vent or needs you to serve as a sounding board.
- Don't overextend your welcome to those who vent and constantly complain without making the effort to change their own behavior or the situation.
- Overuse yes/no questions.
- When you are coaching, don't talk too much. (A good guidance is to speak about 50% as much as you would like to.)
- When you are mentoring, you may talk as much as you like!
- Buy into your coachee's limited thinking. For example, if the coachee sees only one choice or action, help her explore others. Ask her questions that will stimulate her thinking about possibilities.
- Settle for vague generalities about follow up after your coaching dialogue.
- Inadvertently join in sentiments that are unproductive and disempowering for your mentee, your coachee and/or yourself.